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ABSTRACT

This paper contains a discussion of the activities of the Deputy Commissioner of Occupational and Adult Education in the U.S. Office of Education, perceptions of some trends in vocational education and the role of advisory committees, and the relationship between career education and vocational education. A major responsibility of the deputyship is carrying out the promotion and implementation of the career education concept. However, this does not imply that career education and vocational education are considered synonymous in the Office of Education, for they are not. Vocational education is one necessary component. In carrying out the promotion and implementation activities, several trends will be noted concerning vocational education, including: (1) determination of acceptable levels of performance, (2) development of procedures for determining costs, (3) assumption of placement responsibilities, and (4) more realistic and scientific long range planning. Lay advisory committees play a role in the accountability process, particularly program evaluation, but their effectiveness needs to be strengthened. (SB)

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OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

Major Thrusts for 1973 and Beyond*

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is a distinct pleasure for me to have been invited to speak to you for a few minutes this morning.

I must admit, however, that I accepted this assignment with some degree of apprehension. As the date drew closer, my level of apprehension cannot be said to have abated appreciably. If you think about it, I'm sure you'll understand my concern.

First, I'm only the nominee for the position of Deputy Commissioner of Occupational and Adult Education in the U. S. Office of Education and, therefore, none of what I say can be considered very official and obviously can't be based upon a great deal of first hand knowledge. By necessity, my remarks must be rather general.

Secondly, as of this morning, I've spent a total of five days in the U. S. Office, on a consultant basis, receiving briefings about the requirements of the position on the one hand and the intricacies of the federal bureaucracy on the other. I can assure you that at this moment I do not perceive myself as an instant expert in either area.

Third, this is the first speech I've been asked to give since being nominated, and it had to be before this important, perceptive and extremely knowledgeable group. I don't want you to think that I feel intimidated or anything, but I will admit that I'd feel a bit more comfortable if this were the annual conference of the Girl Scouts of America.

Finally, I'm very aware of the fact that I share one affliction which the Vice President ascribed to himself when he first took office--my name is hardly a household word. I know there's been a great deal of "Bill Whoing" going on since the announcement of my nomination a few weeks ago.

None of those four factors is likely to do very much to enhance one's self concept. As a result, I'd be less than honest with you if I didn't admit that, initially at least, I was looking forward to this talk with about as much anticipation as I would to an appendectomy.

I decided a few days ago, however, that since this was a sophisticated and knowledgeable audience you would undoubtedly be very aware of the intricacies of this new position. You would also be aware that, as only a nominee for the position, I would have quite a lot to learn. In short, I decided you probably wouldn't expect too much in the first place. After some reflection, I therefore decided this was probably the best possible audience to begin with, since you'd undoubtedly be sympathetic. Consequently, as I said initially, it is a distinct pleasure for me to be here this morning.

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* by Dr. William F. Pierce, before the Joint Meeting of State and National Advisory Councils of Vocational Education, Washington, D.C., November 18, 1972

I'd like to take my allotted time discussing with you, very briefly: (1) Some activities of the new deputyship, insofar as the office has had an opportunity to develop them up to this point, (2) what I perceive to be some of the trends in vocational education which each of us will probably confront over the next few years, (3) my perception of the role of lay advisory committees and councils and (4) the relationship between career education and vocational education.

I mentioned that I wanted to talk about how I perceived several things. This business of perception is second only to communications when one considers the imprecise arts. My old psychology professor used to say, "We live in a world of perception. Unfortunately, our worlds differ drastically." As you know, any two of us can observe the same occurrence and still "see" two different things.

For example, the story is told of the fellow who had always wanted a purebred Labrador Retriever to take duck hunting. He saved his money and finally had saved enough to get the best dog, with the best and longest pedigree that money could buy. On the first day of duck season, he excitedly put his waders, his duck call and his favorite shotgun in the trunk of his car. He then went to the back yard and lovingly carried his new Labrador Retriever to the car and placed him gently on the front seat. Upon arriving at the blind, and after putting on his gear, he placed the dog at his side and began to blow the duck call. Shortly, a beautiful flight of Mallards came in low over the blind. The hunter raised his shotgun, fired, and a duck fell to the water. The hunter turned to his impatient Labrador Retriever and said, "Fetch." Whereupon, with his head and tail held high, the dog walked across the water, picked up the bird, walked back across the water and proudly dropped the duck at his master's feet.

Well, needless to say, the fellow was a bit nonplussed. He grabbed the dog, put him in the front seat of his car and drove quickly to the home of his best friend. Running into the house, he told his friend, "Grab your coat, don't ask any questions and come with me. I've something fantastic to show you."

Being a good friend, the fellow did as he was asked. The guy drove back to the blind, got dog and friend situated and began to blow the duck call. Again, as before a flight of Mallards came in low over the blind. Again he aimed and shot and again a duck fell to the water. The hunter turned to the dog and said "Fetch." Once again the dog walked across the water, picked up the duck, walked back and dropped it at his master's feet. Turning to his friend, the hunter asked excitedly, "Well, what do you think of that?" His friend said, "What do you know about that? That dog can't swim!"

At any rate, and as imprecise and inaccurate as they may be, the following are my perceptions.

Let's begin with activities of the new deputyship. The second report of the National ADvisory Council for Vocational Education called for the placement of Vocational Education Administration at a higher level within the organizational structure of the U. S. Office of Education. That need, as expressed by many people, has now been realized with the creation of this new deputyship.

The Office of Education leaders are fully committed to the new deputyship and I can assure you that the intent of Congress will not only be realized, but exceeded. The Office of Education will, therefore, very quickly address itself to, among other things, the following tasks:

1. Utilizing the career education concept, attempt to convey to the American public how unrealistic are the expectations that far too many of them place on a college degree.

2. Again utilizing the career education concept, convince educational administrators everywhere, and at every level, of the absolutely essential importance that academic and vocational education hold--one for the other.

3. Maximize career development opportunities for all children from kindergarten on.

4. Maximize not only the availability of vocational education programs for all secondary students but optimize both vocational and academic skill training alternatives. We must utilize all segments of our environment for educational purposes when such utilization is appropriate. WE must take full advantage of all the alternative delivery systems available to us.

5., Increase the secondary vocational enrollment to a more realistic percentage.

6. Increase the post-secondary technical enrollments in all community colleges to a more realistic and accentable percentage.

7. Provide special emphasis for increased funding at the post-secondary level. We are very aware of the special emphasis Congress has placed on the initiation, expansion and especially the upgrading of post-secondary occupational courses. We are committed to adding to the staff of the Bureau people who have broad experience in the field of post-secondary occupational education in community and junior colleges. Congress felt those people were not represented in the old Bureau. They shall be in the new. And one of their responsibilities will be to see to it that community colleges are appropriately represented in

all policy and funding decisions of the Bureau.

8. Maximize the use of private, post-secondary institutions.

9. Re-emphasize our vocational and academic efforts for our poorly served minority citizens.

10. Provide better coordination between all manpower programs so we can assure ourselves of the greatest efficiency possible in both expenditure of funds and service to people.

11. Make a special effort to maximize the training opportunities and alternatives for adults. In my opinion, we have done an exceedingly poor job of providing supplemental and upgrading skills to adults who are not yet out of work but who are not performing at their maximum capacity and, therefore, have not reached their maximum earning potential.

12. Provide special emphasis to two groups of adults:

    A. The returning Viet Nam era veterans
    B. The elderly disenfranchised

13. Maximize the expansion and utilization of counselors and guidance personnel at all levels. I am very aware that the writers of the House report on the Education Amendments of 1972 used testimony provided by the American Personnel and Guidance Association to prove that the nation's schools are falling far short of attaining Congress' goal that the preparation of students for earning a living is an integral part of the school's program. I think it is significant that the APGA has become a spokesman for occupational and adult education. I am also very aware that the National Advisory Council's Sixth Report is devoted exclusively to counseling and guidance. And, as you know, Congress stipulated that at least one of the seven legislated Grade 16 positions in the new Bureau should be filled by someone having experience in occupational guidance and counseling. Consequently, one of the observable activities of this deputyship will deal with the expansion and promotion of the role of counseling and guidance personnel at all levels.

14. Utilizing the mandated senior advisor positions, the office will maximize the coordination of all programs so that skilled workers and subprofessional occupations are appropriately represented in all policy and funding decisions of the new Bureau.

Now I realize that's a pretty long, rather diverse list. A cynic might accuse me of simply throwing something into that list to please everyone. You may be cynical if you like. You are, of course, free to disbelieve me. I ask only that you withhold your criticism and judge the office on its performance.

This deputyship has also been assigned the major responsibility for carrying out both the promotion and implementation of the career education concept. Consequently, that will constitute one of the new Bureau's major activities. Current planning, therefore, calls for the establishment of a career education office within the new Bureau.

Let me hasten to stress at this point that, while the focus for the career education concept will be in the new deputyship, the emphasis for career education will permeate all of the U. S. Office of Education. Consequently, each deputy commissioner will not only share in the promotional responsibilities, they will also assist in the implementation of the concept by seeing to it that as many as possible of the discretionary funds within their deputyship are allocated to career education.

In a moment, I want to talk more about the relationship of career education to vocational education. However, I want to emphasize here and now that career education and vocational education are not synonymous and that the fact that the responsibility for the promotion and implementation of career education has been placed in this deputyship must not be perceived as conveying the idea that career education and vocational education are felt to be the same by the U. S. Office of Education.

So much for the activities of the new deputyship. I trust it'll be effective. I know it will be busy.

As the office turns its early attention to these activities, what might we expect as new trends in vocational education? I'm not sure the ideas I'll present below can be described as new trends. Perhaps they can better be characterized as areas of added or special emphasis since most of the things I'll mention are already happening--someplace--to some extent.

The age of accountability abounds throughout the land. Citizens and taxpayers are demanding that educators be held responsible or accountable for their activities. And educators are responding to those demands. Vocational educators are no exception. We may well see the day, therefore, in the not-too-distant future, when vocational educators are reimbursed on a student headcount basis only for those students who demonstrate the ability to perform at some acceptable level. All of us will undoubtedly be trying to determine what constitutes accountability in vocational education, and if it isn't program reimbursement on a headcount basis then it will be something else. The determination of what constitutes an acceptable level of performance will undoubtedly be a future activity.

That acceptable standard of performance may well be specific performance objectives, developed and agreed upon by specialists in a particular vocational area and which have been developed for a specific vocational program. These performance objectives, which are quantifiable, measure output rather than input and consequently will tell us, in measurable terms, whether a student can perform at the level we say he should. I expect many of us will be involved directly in the development of specific performance objectives.

The National Advisory Council has called for funding of vocational programs on an added cost basis. Several states are currently developing procedures for determining added costs and have begun, or soon will begin, to provide all reimbursement on that concept. I predict that many more states will soon follow suit.

The National Advisory Council, as well as many other individual and groups, has called upon schools to assume placement responsibilities for all their graduates. That, of course, is the ultimate in accountability. I'm convinced that many more educational institutions will, either voluntarily or through legislation, assume this responsibility in the future.

We may see the day when national policy stipulates that no federal funds can be utilized for any vocational program which does not lead to employment at an hourly wage at least equal to the federal minimum. The implications of such a suggestion to the national economy on the one hand and to underemployed citizens on the other makes this idea one which requires careful consideration.

More realistic and scientific long range planning at both the state and local levels will be a trend or added emphasis for the future. One tool which I expect to see adopted more and more frequently is the program planning and budgeting system which provides a strategy for decision makers to utilize scarce financial resources in the most efficient manner possible. I've gone through it in my state. It's traumatic to some but worthwhile in the final analysis.

These are only six areas of emphasis that my crystal ball cleared long enough for me to see. Perhaps yours is clearer. If so, you can probably see many more significant trends. I'd prefer you kept them to yourself if you do. I'm not sure my system can stand too many more changes at the moment.

What will be the role of lay advisory committees as the future of vocational, occupational and adult education unfolds? One only has to look at P.L. 92-318 to see that their activities will be increased, and their leadership role strengthened. This act not only establishes the Section 1202 State Post-Secondary Education Commission, but also establishes the Section 1056 Planning Committee, as well as extending the responsibilities of State Advisory Councils for Vocational Education to include the provisions of the new act.

I for one am committed to the autonomy concept for lay advisory committees. To be effective, they can be the creature of no one. Conversely, I reject the practice that the autonomy of lay committees should ever lead to an adversary role between the committee and the agency it evaluates. Antagonism and animosity between the agency and the lay committee are both counterproductive and wasteful. On the other hand, defensiveness and secretiveness by the state agency is immature and harmful.

I would make only one recommendation to the state advisory councils, assuming of course that no council is guilty of playing the adversary role I described earlier. It is my feeling that state councils do not and never have done an adequate job of evaluating vocational education programs. I have a feeling that evaluations have been, in many instances, imprecise, unscientific, invalid and lacking in rigor. As the hunter's friend showed us, we live in a world of perception, and I plan, over the next few months to test that perception out thoroughly. I hope I'm wrong. I'm afraid I'm not.

I can summarize my feelings regarding lay advisory committees and councils by saying simply that I think they're essential, but I think they can become more effective. Let me say, kind of parenthetically, that the National Advisory Council and the state councils should be justifiably proud. A high percentage of the recommendations you've made over the past five years have been implemented or initiated. And vocational and adult education is the better for it.

Finally, I'd like to spend the next few minutes talking about the relationship between vocational education and career education. Since the major responsibility for the promotion of career education will rest in the new deputyship, it seems appropriate for me to give you my definition of career education. From that definition, the relationship to vocational education should become apparent.

Let's kind of back into what it <u>is</u> by talking a little bit about what it is not.

First, career education is <u>not</u> vocational education, although vocational education is a necessary component of career education.

Second, career education is <u>not</u> occupational training, although, again, that's a necessary ingredient.

Third, career education is <u>not</u> simply the provision of occupational information beginning in the kindergarten level, the so-called world-of-work concept, although that's also very important.

Fourth, career education is <u>not</u> obtained by the establishment of an area vocational center.

Fifth, career education is not relative only to those children and youth who will not go to college, and

Sixth, career education is not separate from, independent of, or unrelated to academic education.

Career education is, therefore, an attitude, an educational philosophy, if you will, that must, to be totally effective, permeate the thinking of every teacher, counselor, administrator, board member and parent in this country. It is simply a commitment to do everything possible, beginning with preschool programs, and continuing through graduate school, to see to it that the educational system prepares all children, youth and adults, who do not suffer from an insurmountable physical, mental or emotional impairment, to function at the maximum of their ability when they enter the labor market. This presumes, therefore, that fourth grade teachers teach a child math, not because there is any intrinsic value in learning fractions but because some form of mathematics is absolutely necessary to allow that child, as an adult, to be gainfully employed. That teacher understands that fourth grade math is career education. It also presumes that the structure of and sequence of the math program, as we know it, may have to be changed because the development of performance objectives will define for the teacher what is essential in the math program of youngsters.

The fourth grade teacher is obviously used only for illustrative purposes. The same type of example can be developed for the sophomore English teacher, the senior language instructor, the community college history professor and the graduate psychology course instructor. Career education, therefore, pervades all of education and everything we do is done not for the sake of education, for its own sake, but for the sake of the student's career preparation.

As you can see, vocational education is one necessary component of career education. One might say, therefore, that the existence of vocational education is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the existence of career education.

Ladies and Gentlemen, my time has run out, and so have my topics. Each of the four topics Cal Dellefield asked me to touch on in this speech are full speech subjects in themselves. Consequently, I've had to treat each of them in a rather cursory fashion.

I trust that briefness of the treatments has allowed you to gain some feel for what I hope can be accomplished in the Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education over the next months and years.

I also hope that, as a result of this brief talk, when someone asks you over the next few weeks "Bill who?" you'll at least be able to say, "Oh, you know, Bill what's-his-name."

Thank you for inviting me.